

**Orlando VA Healthcare System
PSYCHOLOGY POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIP
PROGRAM
(2022-2023)**



Department of Veterans Affairs
Orlando VA Healthcare System

Dear potential applicants,

We are delighted that you are considering the Orlando VA Healthcare System for your postdoctoral fellowship! Making an informed decision on which fellowship would be a good fit for your interests and training needs is a difficult task. We have strived to include all of the relevant information you might need to help you make that decision. I do want to note that our fellowship program, like many others in the country, has been impacted by COVID-19. In light of that impact, we have had to make several adjustments to our current postdoctoral Fellows' training experience. Additionally, several of our regular clinical rotation sites have restricted trainee participation due to safety concerns for the Veterans we treat and the trainees. Given the uncertainty of when this pandemic may end, we have not listed those specific rotations in this year's brochure. We do not expect any further impact on the remaining clinical rotations and training experiences. However, it may be possible that additional adjustments may be required in the future if conditions related to COVID-19 change. Please know we are committed to providing a quality and fulfilling fellowship and will do whatever we can to ensure you have a great experience. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions regarding our program.

Sincerely,

Bryan Batien, Ph.D., ABPP
Psychology Training Director

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THE SETTING

ORLANDO, FLORIDA

Orlando and the Central Florida region are known as vacation hotspots, attracting around 60 million visitors every year. Orlando is home to world-famous theme parks and attractions such as Disney World, Universal Studios, and SeaWorld among many others.



Central Florida is also home to NASA's Kennedy Space Center, where rocket launches can regularly be seen throughout the entire region including from the windows of the Orlando VA Medical Center. Orlando is the home to professional sports teams including NBA's Orlando Magic and the Orlando City Soccer Club. Orlando offers an abundance of performing arts through venues such as the Dr. Phillips Center for Performing Arts as well as a number of museums.

Access to world-class entertainment is only a part of what living in Central Florida has to offer. Nicknamed "The City Beautiful," Orlando is the third-largest metropolitan area in Florida with a population of roughly 2.5 million in the greater Central Florida region. Orlando is an ethnically diverse city with population consisting of 36% White individuals, 32% Hispanic, 25% Black, 3% Asian, and 4% Two+/Native/Other (based on Census Data). Orlando is known as an LGBTQ+ friendly community, achieving a perfect score on the Human Rights Campaign's Municipal Equality Index, which measures the LGBTQ+ inclusiveness of cities' laws, policies, and services.



Central Florida is also a paradise for nature lovers. The Orlando VA catchment area includes world-class beaches including Daytona Beach and Cocoa Beach. Natural springs are spread throughout the region and offer opportunities to get up close with nature and wildlife. Popular natural springs include Blue Springs, where manatees can be seen up close and personal at certain times of the year.



ORLANDO VA HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

The Orlando VA Health Care System (VAHCS), was officially established as a new VA facility in October of 2006. The Orlando VAHCS includes one of the nation's newest VA hospitals in Lake Nona with 134 inpatient beds, a 120-bed Community Living Center in Lake Nona, a two-site 110-bed Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Program at Lake Nona and Lake Baldwin, a multispecialty medical center at Lake Baldwin (uptown Orlando), two very large, comprehensive outpatient clinics in Daytona Beach and Viera (Cocoa Beach area), five Community-Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOC) in Clermont, Kissimmee, Deltona, Tavares, and Palm Bay.

The Orlando VAHCS Lake Nona Campus is co-located with the University of Central Florida College of Medicine, the University of Florida Academic and Research Center, the National Simulation, Learning, Education and Research Network (SimLEARN) Center, and Nemours Children's Hospital in the area known as the "Medical City." Orlando is rapidly becoming a prime destination for healthcare professionals and patients seeking state-of-the-art care.



POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIP IN CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY

MISSION

The mission of the Orlando VA Healthcare System (VAHCS) Psychology Postdoctoral Fellowship Training Program is to develop ethical and competent psychologists capable of delivering quality care through evidence-based practice for the purpose of improving the quality of life and well-being for America's Veterans. The Psychology Training Program's mission is part of the larger mission of the Department of Veterans Affairs, set by President Abraham Lincoln "To care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow, and his orphan."



TRAINING MODEL

The psychology postdoctoral fellowship at the Orlando VA Healthcare System follows a scholar practitioner model of training. The fellowship is an integrated component of a multilevel training program at the Orlando VA.

The fellowship program focuses on advanced clinical practices that prepare Fellows to function independently as a psychologist. The fellowship program provides generalist training within a specific area of focus (trauma/PTSD or substance use disorders). Each Fellow will receive a range of clinical experiences and trainings that hone their general clinical skills while offering advanced knowledge of skills within an area of specialty. Each Fellow's experience is tailored to meet their specific training and professional goals.

Our generalist approach to training emphasizes evidence-based practice that converges clinical expertise, research, and individual patient characteristics. Such individual attributes include aspects of diversity, personal values, strengths, and histories, as well as demographic variables and culture. Fellows receive specific training in the delivery of evidence-based psychotherapies within their specialty.



Our training program values active learning and supervision. Supervision of Fellows follows a junior colleague model, affording Fellows a graduated level of responsibility, culminating with the expectation that Fellows are fully prepared for licensure attainment and independent practice by the end of the Fellowship. Continual communication between the Fellow and their supervisor is expected, with Fellows providing ongoing feedback to their supervisors regarding the supervision process and their supervisory needs. Additionally, Fellows are expected to provide ongoing feedback and evaluation of the training program as a whole.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Over the course of the training year, Fellows will be able to demonstrate competency within the following areas:

1. Integration of science and practice
2. Ethical and legal standards
3. Individual and cultural diversity
4. Advanced clinical competency
5. Supervision competency

DIVERSITY

The Orlando VA Healthcare System serves our nation's Veterans, who represent a wide range of diversity including, but not limited to, differences in gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, physical ability, regional affiliation, age, and religious/spiritual orientation. Cultural diversity is celebrated at Orlando VAHCS and Fellows' ability to work with demographically diverse patients and incorporate issues related to culture, ethnicity, and race is seen as a vital component of skill development. The Psychology Training Program is deeply committed to the appreciation of diversity as well as the development of



multicultural competence. The Psychology Fellowship Program incorporates a variety of training experiences to help Fellows expand their awareness, knowledge and appreciation related to diversity and cultural factors. Issues related to culture and diversity are highlighted throughout weekly didactics and seminars, readings, other learning activities, and clinical supervision.

PROGRAM STRUCTURE

The OVAHCS Fellowship is a generalist training experience that is able to be individually tailored by choosing an emphasis area of trauma/PTSD or substance use. Fellows will spend 32 hours per week engaging in clinical work within their specialty area of choice; either the Trauma Recovery Specialty Team (TRuST) or Substance Use Treatment Program (SUD). Of note, even though these are specialty clinics, the diagnostic overlap within our Veteran population is such that each Fellow will encounter a range of presentations within each clinic and thus develop their generalist skills as well as trauma- or SUD-specific skills.

The 8 hours not dedicated to clinical activities are spent in formal educational, supervisory, and professional development activities. Additional complementary clinical experiences may be added based on the individual Fellow's training and professional development goals.

DIDACTIC/TRAINING SEMINARS

Postdoctoral Fellows are engaged in weekly didactics and training seminars throughout the year. A weekly Advanced Topics didactic and discussion series spans a wide range of areas and topics to increase the breadth and depth of clinical skills and knowledge. Fellows also participate in a weekly didactic on Clinical Supervision to promote development knowledge and skills related to providing clinical supervision. The training in clinical supervision includes a supervisory-like experience providing clinical consultation to psychology interns. Fellows receive additional individual supervision on their supervisory experience from clinical staff.

MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

Fellows have the option to participate in the trainee mentorship program, where they select a faculty member from a list of available mentors. The mentor and Fellow decide on the frequency of their meetings and the topics discussed, and the relationship is designed to be non-evaluative and supportive. Examples of areas of focus in the mentor/Fellow relationship have included discussions related to career planning, work/life balance, and professional development.



SAMPLE FELLOW WEEKLY SCHEDULE

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.	Clinical Practice	Professional Development Time	Clinical Practice	Clinical Practice	Clinical Practice
9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.		Vertical Supervision with Intern & Intern's Supervisor Training in Supervision Didactic			
10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.					
11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.					
12:00 p.m. – 12:30 p.m.	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
12:30 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.	Administrative Time	Fellows' Socialization Time	Administrative Time	Administrative Time	Administrative Time
1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.	Clinical Practice	Advanced Topics Discussion	Clinical Practice	Clinical Practice	Clinical Practice
2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.		Professional Development Time			
3:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.					
4:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.	Administrative Time	Administrative Time	Administrative Time	Administrative Time	Administrative Time

MAJOR CLINICAL EXPERIENCES

TRAUMA RECOVERY SPECIALTY TEAM (TRuST)

The Trauma Recovery Specialty Team (TRuST) is the Posttraumatic Stress Disorder Clinical Team (PCT) at the Orlando VA Healthcare System. The TRuST team specializes in the assessment and treatment of trauma-related disorders, with an emphasis on new or chronic Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Fellows with a focus on trauma will be an integrated member of the TRuST team and receive specialized training in the assessment and treatment of PTSD and trauma-related disorder. The assessment of PTSD and trauma includes advanced diagnostic evaluations to differentiate PTSD from other trauma-related disorders (e.g., depression, anxiety, panic, personality disorders, malingering, cognitive disorders). Fellow will also provide individual and group psychotherapy aimed at helping Veterans recover from trauma-related conditions. Treatment of PTSD emphasizes evidence-based psychotherapies including both Prolonged Exposure and Cognitive Processing Therapy for PTSD. The TRuST team may offer options for additional clinical experiences such as clinical cases with more complex presentations of trauma, treatment of various anxiety disorders, or eating disorders. Fellows also have the option of participating as members of the Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) team, including co-leading DBT skills group and working with individual DBT patients.

Supervisors: Laura Meyers, Ph.D., ABPP, Noelle Balliett, Ph.D., Savannah McSheffrey, Ph.D., Mimi Zhao, Ph.D., & Bryan Batién, Ph.D., ABPP

SUBSTANCE ABUSE TREATMENT PROGRAM

The Substance Abuse Treatment Program at the Orlando VA Healthcare System is comprised of a standard outpatient substance use clinic and the Intensive Outpatient Substance Use Disorders treatment program. The SUD programs provide a spectrum of individual and group services across multiple locations in Central Florida in order to treat a wide range of mild to severe substance use disorders and comorbid conditions.

Psychology postdoctoral fellows with an emphasis in SUD treatment will receive advanced training in the comprehensive assessment and treatment of substance use disorders and comorbid conditions, which include both individual and group therapies. The SUD fellowship is divided between the standard SUD outpatient services clinic and the Intensive Outpatient Substance Use Disorders treatment program rotations. The fellow's clinical time is roughly divided equally between the year-long rotations. Fellows will receive specialized training in evidence-based treatments for SUD including Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Substance Use Disorders, Motivational Interviewing, Motivational Enhancement, Contingency Management, and Cognitive Behavioral Relapse Prevention Therapy.

The interprofessional treatment teams within the SUD programs along fellows to work and train alongside of a variety of professionals including psychologists, psychiatrists, nurses, clinical pharmacists, social workers, mental health counselors, as well as various trainees (psychology interns, psychiatry residents, etc.).

Supervisor: Pamela Brown, Ph.D.

EVIDENCE-BASED PSYCHOTHERAPIES

Fellows may have the opportunity to receive specific training and consultation in various evidence-based psychotherapies. Often the trainings include formal, multiday VA trainings with follow-up consultation. Past trainings in evidence-based psychotherapies include Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT) for PTSD, Prolonged Exposure (PE) for PTSD, and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Substance Use Disorders. Please note availability of specific trainings may vary from year to year. Additional requirements such as completing certain number of cases with that specific evidence-based psychotherapy may be required to complete the consultation process. Time commitments vary and may often last for six months to one year.

Location(s): Various

Supervisor(s): Various



DIDACTIC AND TRAINING SEMINARS

ADVANCED TOPICS SERIES

Advanced Topics Series is a weekly didactic and discussion to add to both the breadth and depth of clinical and professional knowledge and skills. The seminar covers a variety of areas ranging from evidence-based practice/treatments, cultural and diversity factors, relevant clinical topics, and professional development. Fellows and series facilitators incorporate review of topics, relevant literature, and in-depth discussions to promote advanced understanding and ability to critically evaluate topic areas. The series may occasionally include joint didactics with Psychiatry Residents. As part of the Advanced Topics Series, Fellows will present on a relevant topic area to the training program (e.g., postdoctoral Fellows, interns, and psychology staff).

Recent topics for Advanced Topic Series include:

Suicide Risk Assessment and the Baker Act	Diversity Considerations for Trauma Treatment
Military Culture	Diversity Considerations in Assessing and Managing Substance Use Disorders
Intersection of Chronic Pain & Trauma	Working with LGBT+ Older Veterans
Interventions for Trauma-Related Nightmares	ACT as a Transdiagnostic Approach
Caring for Transgender Veterans	Diversity Considerations for Assessment
Moral Injury	Trauma and Aging
Intersectionality in LGBT+ Veterans	Insomnia in Alcohol Use Disorder
Considerations for Working with Individuals with Chronic Illnesses	Race-Based Stress and Trauma
Psychopharmacology for PTSD and Substance Use Disorders	Concurrent Treatment of PTSD and Substance Use Disorders
Professional Development: Job Searches and Negotiation	Advocacy in Mental Health
Exposure Therapy and Inhibitory Learning & OCD Development and Treatment	Complex Trauma ABPP Board Certification
Florida Laws and Rules	Professional Development: Transitioning to Independent Practice

TRAINING IN CLINICAL SUPERVISION

The *Vertical Supervision* program promotes the Fellow's development of emerging skills in clinical supervision, including knowledge of and sensitivity to ethical, legal and multicultural issues in providing supervision, formal educational, and experiential training throughout the year.

To facilitate the transition from supervisee to potential supervisor in his/her professional endeavors, Fellows attend didactic seminar on supervision of supervision every other week and, on selected rotations, have direct experience providing supervision-like clinical consultation to interns while receiving supervision on this supervision from the licensed psychologist responsible for the case. The Fellow is expected to demonstrate understanding of basic supervision concepts and principles, and the developmental process of clinical supervision, and to begin to develop a philosophy or model for their own practice of supervision. The Fellow is also expected to demonstrate understanding of the complexity of the supervisor role including ethical, legal, and contextual issues, and to demonstrate an awareness of the current needs of supervised trainees, including how to provide developmentally appropriate feedback.

MENTAL HEALTH GRAND ROUNDS

Fellows are able to attend monthly Mental Health Service Grand Rounds topics vary throughout the year and are informed by peer-reviewed research and cultural/population-based considerations, and are often presented from a variety of professional viewpoints (e.g., Psychiatry, Social Work, etc.). Fellows are strongly encouraged to attend and present to Mental Health Grand Rounds. Other interdisciplinary Grand Rounds, Medical Center Grand Rounds, or other educational offerings may also be available throughout the year and are also optional for Fellows.

INTERPROFESSIONAL LUNCH AND LEARN

Fellows have the option of attending Orlando VA's monthly Interprofessional Lunch and Learn. This learning activity is open to all Orlando VA trainees, from over 70 different professional training programs. The sessions cover a wide arrange of professional and clinical topics relevant to all professionals working in the VA healthcare system.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The training program encourages and values the pursuit of training opportunities beyond those offered within the clinical experiences. Fellows are provided with a list of available mentors and their areas of interest/expertise, and are encouraged to meet as many of the staff as possible early in their training year to determine if they would like to work with one of them as a Mentor. Mentors serve as non-evaluative staff, and therefore cannot not be one of the Fellow's clinical supervisors. The Mentor's primary role is to be a resource to assist the Fellow's professional development, both within the program and planning their path toward early-career psychologist.

Built into each Fellows' schedule is professional development time, which Fellows may spend with their mentor, preparing professional presentations, manuscripts or conducting clinical research, preparing for the licensure exam, job seeking, or other related endeavors. It is our aim that each Fellow will complete the training year fully prepared for licensure and with employment secured.



POSTDOCTORAL RESIDENCY ADMISSIONS, SUPPORT, AND INITIAL PLACEMENT DATA

Date Program Tables are updated: August 8, 2021

POSTDOCTORAL PROGRAM ADMISSIONS

Briefly describe in narrative form important information to assist potential applicants in assessing their likely fit with your program. This description must be consistent with the program's policies on intern selection and practicum and academic preparation requirements:

- Fellows must have completed all degree requirements for a Ph.D. or Psy.D. in Clinical or Counseling Psychology from an APA-, CPA-, or PCSAS-accredited program.
- Fellows must have completed an APA- or CPA-accredited internship.

Describe any other required minimum criteria used to screen applicants:

- Fellow must be a citizen of the United States. The Department of Veterans Affairs is unable to consider applications from anyone who is not currently a U.S. Citizen. Verification of citizenship is required following selection. All Fellows must complete a Certification of Citizenship in the United States prior to the beginning of VA training.
- Federal law requires that most males living in the US between the ages of 18 and 26 register with the Selective Service System. Male, for this purpose, is any individual assigned male on their birth certificate regardless of current gender. Males required to register who failed to do so by their 26th birthday are barred from holding any position in any Executive Agency. Visit <https://www.sss.gov> to register for the Selective Service System, print proof of registration, or apply for a Status Information Letter.
- Postdoctoral Fellows are subject to fingerprinting and background checks following match selection. Match results and selection decisions are contingent on passing these screens.



- The Department of Veterans Affairs is a drug-free workplace in accordance with federal mandates and laws. All VA employees, including trainees, are subject to randomized drug screening. Ongoing participation in the internship is contingent on passing these screens. For additional information, please refer to the VA's Office of Academic Affiliation (OAA) at [VA Drug-Free Workplace Program Guide for Veterans Health Administration Health Professions Trainees](#).
- Health Professions Trainees (HPTs), including Psychology Postdoctoral Fellows and Interns, are appointed as temporary employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs. As such, HPTs are subject to laws, policies, and guidelines posted for VA staff members. There are infrequent times in which this guidance can change during a training year which may create new requirements or responsibilities for HPTs. If employment requirements change during the course of a training year, HPTs will be notified of the change and impact as soon as possible and options provided. The Orlando VA Training Director will provide you with the information you need to understand the requirement and reasons for the requirement in timely manner.

FINANCIAL AND OTHER BENEFIT SUPPORT FOR UPCOMING TRAINING YEAR

Annual Stipend/Salary for Full-time Interns	\$46,334
Annual Stipend/Salary for Half-time Interns	n/a
Program provides access to medical insurance for intern?	Yes
If access to medical insurance is provided:	
Trainee contribution to cost required?	Yes
Coverage of family member(s) available?	Yes
Coverage of legally married partner available?	Yes
Coverage of domestic partner available?	Yes
Hours of Annual Paid Personal Time Off (PTO and/or Vacation)	104
Hours of Annual Paid Sick Leave	104
In the event of medical conditions and/or family needs that require extended leave, does the program allow reasonable unpaid leave to interns/residents in excess of personal time off and sick leave?	Yes



FINANCIAL AND OTHER BENEFIT SUPPORT FOR UPCOMING TRAINING YEAR
(Continued)

Other benefits (please describe):

In addition to health insurance, Fellows are eligible for dental, vision, and life insurance. Fellows may be additionally allocated up to five days of authorized absence (AA) for professional development activities (e.g. conferences, presentations, interviews, or meetings with academic program advisor/ faculty). The United States government covers Fellows for malpractice under the Federal Liability Reform Tort Act. Please note that Florida does not have a state income tax.

*Note. Programs are not required by the Commission on Accreditation to provide all benefits listed in this table.

INITIAL POST-RESIDENCY POSITIONS

(Provided an Aggregated Tally for the Preceding 3 Cohorts)

	2017-2020	
Total # of interns who were in the 3 cohorts	11	
Total # of interns who remain in training in the internship program	0	
	PD	EP
Academic teaching	n/a	n/a
Community mental health center	n/a	n/a
Consortium	n/a	n/a
University Counseling Center	n/a	n/a
Hospital/Medical Center	n/a	n/a
Veterans Affairs Health Care System	1	6
Psychiatric facility	n/a	n/a
Correctional facility	n/a	n/a
Health maintenance organization	n/a	n/a
School district/system	n/a	n/a
Independent practice setting	n/a	2
Other	n/a	2

Note: "PD" = Post-doctoral residency position; "EP" = Employed Position. Each individual represented in this table should be counted only one time. For former trainees working in more than one setting, select the setting that represents their primary position.

APPLYING TO THE FELLOWSHIP

Number of Available Postdoctoral Fellowship Positions: 2

APPIC MATCH NUMBER

9167

FELLOWSHIP YEAR

August 8, 2021 – August 6, 2020

The Fellowship is a one-year, full-time appointment (constituting 2080 hours). Stipend funding is not available for any extension. Unpaid maternity/paternity leave is available; all Fellows are required to complete 12 months of training, and thus any use of extended leave will require a discussion with the Training Director and an update to their of their individualized training plan.

INTERVIEWS & SELECTION PROCESS

The application process for the Psychology Postdoctoral Fellowship is completed online through the APPA CAS portal at <https://appicpostdoc.liaisoncas.com>. Individual interviews will be conducted by invitation only, following initial evaluation of application materials. Current information on interview dates and format (e.g., virtual, in-person, etc.) can be found in APPIC's Universal Psychology Postdoctoral Directory (UPPD) which can be accessed on APPIC'S website (www.appic.org).

Complete application packets and materials must be received by us **by 11:59 PM Eastern Time Zone December 19, 2021** for consideration for Fellowship appointment beginning the following August 2021.

Your online APPA CAS application package should include:

- Completed APPA CAS application
- Current official graduate transcript(s)
- Three letters of reference from faculty members or internship supervisors who know you and your work well
- Cover letter
- Curriculum vitae
- A letter from your Internship Training Director that an APA-accredited internship will be completed before the start data of the Fellowship.



- A letter from your APA-accredited graduate program Training Director that the Ph.D./Psy.D. has been awarded or that all degree requirements will be completed before the start date of the Fellowship.

INTERVIEWS

Individual interviews will be conducted by invitation only, following initial evaluation of application materials. Applicants invited for interviews will be notified by **January 20, 2022**.

All interviews will be virtual and are scheduled for **February 3, 2022**.

Our training program follows the APPIC postdoctoral selection guidelines: <https://www.appic.org/Postdocs/Selection-Resources/Timelines-for-Postdoctoral-Selection/Postdoctoral-Selection-Guidelines>. Offers will be made on the Uniform Notification Date (UND), unless reciprocal offers, per APPIC selection guidelines, are made prior to the UND. Offers will initially be made by phone. If the applicant is unable to be reached by phone, the offer will be sent by email.

NON-DISCRIMINATION

Federal law prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age and disability. The Orlando VAHCS Psychology Training Program extends this definition to mean that no information about the applicant which is not relevant to the applicant's potential to succeed in the training program is utilized in the selection process.

During the Fellowship year, should there be an instance of discrimination experienced or observed by trainees or staff, there is an obligation to address the problem so as to minimize psychological harm. Fellows are encouraged to consult with their clinical supervisor, mentor, training director, Chief of Mental Health Education, or Associate Chief of Staff for Education for assistance in such matters.

Where this level of resolution is not effective or the instances are systemic, trainees have access to formal procedures, as per Medical Center Policy. The local Equal Opportunity Officer (EEO) is available for consultation to assist in any employee's exercise of their rights.

SUPERVISED DUTY HOURS

The typical supervised duty hours or "Tour of Duty" is 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Fellows may be permitted to make minor adjustments to these hours to align with their clinical supervisor or clinic schedule.



ACCREDITATION STATUS

The Orlando VA Doctoral Psychology Postdoctoral Fellowship Program is accredited, on contingency, by the American Psychological Association (APA).

The American Psychological Association
Commission on Accreditation
750 First Street, NE
Washington, DC 20002
(202) 336-5979 – Office of Program Consultation and Accreditation

The Orlando VA Psychology Postdoctoral Fellowship Program is a member of APPIC. The Program abides by the APPIC Fellowship selection and notification guidelines.



POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIP CONTACT INFORMATION

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Orlando, FL
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Physical Address

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13800 Veterans Way
Orlando, FL 32827

Orlando VA Healthcare System – Lake Baldwin Outpatient Clinic
5201 Raymond St.
Orlando, FL 32803

APPENDIX A: FACULTY & STAFF

The Orlando VAHCS Psychology Staff includes over 100 doctoral level clinical and counseling psychologists, plus licensed professional counselors, marriage and family therapists, and vocational rehabilitation specialists.

The Education Service is led by **Jennifer Thompson, M.D., MPH**, Associate Chief of Staff for Education and **Paul Deci, M.D., DLFAPA** is the Chief of Mental Health Education. Within Mental Health Service, the Psychology Section is led by **Steven Herman, Ph.D., ABPP**, Chief of Psychology.

Staff Psychologists are assigned to a variety of clinics, including the Behavioral Health Integrated Program (BHIP), medical psychology, Primary Care Mental Health Integration (PCMHI), the Substance Use Disorder (SUD) treatment program, Intensive Case Management in Mental Health Recovery (ICMHR), the inpatient psychiatry (MH CARE) unit, the Center for Recovery Education (CORE), the Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Programs (RRTP), the Trauma Recovery Specialty Team (TRuST), and the Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs). Our staff are diverse not only with regard to areas of clinical expertise, but in terms of theoretical orientations, training experiences, research interests, and cultural backgrounds. Staff psychologists participate in a number of profession-specific and system-wide committees that address issues relating to quality of patient care, efficient delivery of services, and development of new programs. In addition, the staff is highly committed to the training of new professionals and is actively involved in the fellowship training program. Psychology staff who contribute to our training programs are listed below along with brief biographies.

TRAINING PROGRAM STAFF

Training Director

Bryan Batién, Ph.D., ABPP received his Ph.D. from the University of South Dakota and completed his internship at the Cincinnati VA Medical Center. Dr. Batién is a psychologist on the *PTSD treatment (TRuST) team*, and he is also a member of the Emergency Response team at the Orlando VAHCS. He is board certified in Behavioral and Cognitive Psychology. His professional interests include readjustment challenges of OEF/OIF Veterans, PTSD, and anxiety disorders. He routinely provides presentations on Veterans' mental health challenges and readjustment to a number of organizations including NASA, local universities and colleges, and law enforcement agencies. Dr. Batién is a Veteran of the U.S. Army, which included a 14-month deployment to Iraq in 2003-2004.

Teri Carper, Ph.D. is the Chief of Connected Care at the Orlando VAHCS as well as the VISN8 Telemental Health Lead. She completed her undergraduate work at Boston University and earned her Ph.D. in 2010 from the University of Central Florida (UCF). Dr. Carper completed her doctoral internship at Boston Consortium for Clinical Psychology and her postdoctoral fellowship at the National Center for PTSD at Boston VA, where she also held the positions of Clinical Fellow in Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School and Teaching Fellow in Psychiatry at Boston University School of Medicine. Dr. Carper's clinical and research interests center around trauma trajectories and resiliency factors, and she is currently a PI or co-I on three research projects. Dr. Carper's personal interests include animals, distance running, skiing, and most importantly, spending time with her husband and twin daughter and son.

Peter Castranova, Program Support Specialist, Lake Nona, began his career with the federal government in 2009 at the Sarasota National Cemetery. In 2015, he relocated to Orlando and began working for the VA Healthcare System. He has worked various administrative roles in the VA since that time.

Paul Deci, M.D., DLFAPA, Chief of Mental Health Education and Psychiatry. Dr. Deci is the Orlando VA Medical Center psychiatry residency site director. He is the University of Central Florida (UCF)/HCA psychiatry residency Orlando VAMC site director as well as the program director for the Nova Southeastern University Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Osteopathic Medicine (NSU KPCOM) psychiatry residency program. He is a professor of psychiatry at the UCF College of Medicine and a clinical professor of psychiatry at NSU KPCOM. Dr. Deci was the first chief of mental health and then associate chief of staff for mental health at the new Orlando VAMC from February 2009 until November 2017 before returning to graduate medical education. He graduated from Florida State University with a degree in biological sciences in 1983 and from the University of Florida College of Medicine in 1986. He completed his psychiatry residency in 1990 at the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC.) He completed fellowships in community psychiatry in 1991 at MUSC and in mental health services research in 1993 with the National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors Research Institute. He is board certified in psychiatry. He has been with the VA for 25 years between the Charleston, Tuscaloosa, and Orlando VA medical centers.

FACULTY & SUPERVISORY STAFF

Noelle Balliett., *Trauma Recovery Specialty Team, Virtual.* Dr. Balliett is a Staff Psychologist in the TRuST team. She completed her undergraduate work at Wake Forest University and received her PhD in clinical psychology from The University of Tulsa. She completed her pre-doctoral internship at the Bay Pines VA Medical Center and her postdoctoral residency in evidence-based psychotherapy in the Anxiety Disorders Clinic at the VA San Diego Healthcare System. She is licensed in the state of Washington. Dr. Balliett's research interests include the treatment of trauma related nightmares; the role of sleep in the development and maintenance of PTSD; treatment dissemination; and the impact of sleep on treatment engagement and effectiveness. Her clinical interests include treatment of PTSD and nightmares, use of evidence-based interventions, and culturally informed care. She serves as a trainer for Exposure, Relaxation, and Rescription Therapy for trauma-related nightmares. Dr. Balliett's professional diversity interests include the impact of cultural factors on evidence-based psychotherapies, improvement of access to services, and working with historically marginalized populations. She especially enjoys supervising trainees in evidence-based interventions such as Prolonged Exposure, Cognitive Processing Therapy, CBT for Insomnia, and Exposure, Relaxation, and Rescription Therapy for trauma-related nightmares.

Pamela C. Brown, PhD *Substance Use Disorder Treatment Program, Lake Baldwin.* Dr. Brown earned her doctorate in Clinical Psychology from the University of Central Florida in 2010. She completed her doctoral internship at the VA Connecticut Healthcare System, West Haven campus and a 2-year NIDA T32 fellowship in Addictions at the Center for Addictions Research, University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences. She is licensed in Arkansas. She is the Program Manager for Substance Use Disorders Treatment at all sites of care for OVAMC. She received the Outstanding Clinician award from APA Division 18, VA Section in 2017. Her primary clinical interests are treatment of substance use disorders, co-occurring disorders, PTSD, and the recovery approach. Dr. Brown provides and supervises diagnostic assessment and empirically supported interventions for Veterans with Substance Use Disorders and various other mental health issues (i.e., Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, Major Depressive Disorder, Bipolar Disorder, etc.). Her research interests include treatment outcome research and the use of technology for the prevention and treatment of substance use disorders.

Virginia Gründler, Psy.D. *Pain Management, Lake Baldwin.* Dr. Gründler completed her bachelor's degrees in Business Administration from the Inter-American University from Puerto Rico and in Psychology from the Florida International University (FIU). She received her doctorate in Clinical Psychology from The Chicago School, formerly known as The Chicago School of Professional Psychology. Dr. Gründler completed her residency at Nova Southeastern University and her Post-Doctoral Training at Maryville Academy- City of Youth, Chicago IL. Her population expertise includes children, adolescents, and adults of varying ages and settings. Her clinical and consulting experience are varied and include medical settings (with an emergency room specialty); residential treatment facilities for children and adolescents; government/ federal programs including VA, Head Start, the Department of Corrections, women's psychiatric prison facilities; and community mental health centers in both Puerto Rico and Chicago, IL. Her treatment approach is interdisciplinary and includes evidence-based practices, Ericksonian Self Hypnosis, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Family Systems and Psychodynamic approaches. Dr Gründler was a collaborating partner in the success of four CARF accreditations with the Caribbean Health Care System. She is also fully bilingual (English and Spanish) and bi-cultural, and enjoys outdoor activities, and values friendships and commitments.

Cornelia Iucha, Ph.D., *Substance Use Disorders Treatment program, Lake Baldwin.* Dr. Iucha received her Ph.D. from the University of Minnesota, the Clinical Science and Psychopathology Research program. She completed her internship at the Edward Hines, Jr. VA Hospital, and her postdoctoral fellowship with emphasis in trauma at the Washington DC VAMC. Dr. Iucha's research interests center on the etiology and treatment of PTSD. She is the SUD PTSD specialist for the Orlando VAHCS and is a CBT for Substance Use Disorders consultant. She finds inspiration and joy in the exploration of Florida's natural wonders. She also runs the Supervision of Supervision seminar for the postdoctoral fellowship program.

Alysa Ivey, Ph.D., *MHR RTP, Lake Nona*, completed her doctorate in Clinical Psychology with a concentration in Organizational Consulting at Pacific University's School of Graduate Psychology in Oregon. For her dissertation, Dr. Ivey conducted qualitative research on the effects of workplace discrimination and microaggressions on minority Veterans' overall job satisfaction with their military career. Dr. Ivey completed the APA-accredited Psychology Internship training program at the Orlando VA Medical Center and now serves as Psychology Resident at the Lake Nona Domiciliary. Although trained as a Generalist, Dr. Ivey has sought specialty experience in evidence-based treatments for insomnia, chronic pain, depression, anxiety, OCD and related disorders, trauma- and

stressor-related disorders. Following training by Dr. Frost and Lee Shuer in March 2017, Dr. Ivey established Buried in Treasures group therapy for Hoarding Disorder at Kaiser Permanente Northwest Region's Skyline Medical Office—the first of its kind in Salem, Oregon and surrounding mid-valley. Her organizational consulting work has centered on assessment, program evaluation, leadership development, team building, organizational culture and diversity. Dr. Ivey earned her certification as a Facet5 practitioner in July 2015 through the Perrault Consulting Group in Portland, Oregon. Personal interests include creative writing, attending live concerts and theatre, frequenting Universal and Disney parks, exploring Orlando foodie culture, and spending time with her beloved 16-year-old dachshund (Nemo).

Danielle Jahn, Ph.D., *Mental Health Center for Acute Recovery Empowerment (Inpatient), Lake Nona*. Dr. Jahn received her doctoral degree in clinical psychology from Texas Tech University in 2014. She completed her doctoral internship at the VA Eastern Colorado Health Care System in Denver, Colorado. Her postdoctoral fellowship focused on serious mental illness at the VA VISN 5 Mental Illness Research, Education, and Clinical Center. Prior to joining the Orlando VA Medical Center psychology team, Dr. Jahn held various positions, including Clinical Research Psychologist at the VISN 5 MIRECC, Assistant Professor in the Division of Psychiatric Services Research at the University of Maryland School of Medicine, Psychologist at Primary Care Institute (Gainesville, FL), and Health Psychologist at SIMED Health (Gainesville, FL). She is now the Program Manager for the Mental Health Center for Acute Recovery Empowerment, an acute psychiatric inpatient setting. Dr. Jahn is an appointed Research Program Member of the Military Suicide Research Consortium and Older Adult Advisor for the QPR Institute. She has published over 50 peer-reviewed articles and book chapters and authored over 50 research presentations at national and international conferences. She has served on a national task force addressing gaps in clinical training in suicide risk assessment and management through the American Association of Suicidology, acted as the program chair for the 47th Annual American Association of Suicidology Conference, and was a member of the older adult workgroup for the Maryland Governor's Commission on Suicide Prevention. Dr. Jahn's clinical and research interests focus on suicide prevention, serious mental illness, older adults, and transitions of care.

Nkaku Kisaalita, Ph.D. is a Psychologist at the Orlando VAMC with a background in Clinical Health Psychology and pain management. He completed his undergraduate work at UNC at Chapel Hill and earned his doctorate in Clinical Psychology from the University of Florida Department of Clinical & Health Psychology in 2014. He completed his doctoral internship in Medical Psychology at the Medical College of Georgia/Charlie Norwood

VAMC Psychology Consortium in Augusta GA. He then completed a Pain Psychology Postdoctoral Fellowship at the James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital in Tampa FL. Dr. Kisaalita joined the Orlando VAMC Medical Psychology staff as an outpatient Pain Psychologist in 2015. In addition to his clinical interests in behavioral pain management, Dr. Kisaalita has published several peer-reviewed empirical studies on chronic pain and placebo analgesia and has presented his research at national and international scientific meetings. Other professional interests include cultural diversity, positive psychology, and strength-based approaches. Personal interests include fitness/health, soccer, traveling, and cooking. Additionally, Dr. Kisaalita is self-described obsessive UNC basketball fan.

Valerie Masten Hoese, Ph.D. received her degree in Human Services Psychology from the University of Maryland Baltimore County in 1990, having completed tracks in Behavioral Medicine and Clinical Psychology. She completed her internship at the Springfield Hospital Center in Sykesville, MD. She is a Clinical Neuropsychologist and has worked in a variety of settings, including a Level I trauma center, neurology practice, nursing homes, psychiatric hospital, jail, community medical centers, and continues in independent practice providing medicolegal assessment. She has published and presented in neurotoxic exposure, cognitive rehabilitation, professional practice issues, and cultural and diversity variables in neuropsychological assessment. She is an Associate Professor at the University of Florida College of Medicine and teaches a section on Neuropsychological Assessment. She teaches at the University of Central Florida as an Associate Professor in the Neurosciences doctoral program. She is licensed in Florida (active) and Maryland (inactive). She serves on several committees for APA and the National Academy of Neuropsychology. She is the former training director of the Orlando VA and current Medical Psychology supervisor. Her clinical interests are in the areas of assessment of performance validity, cross cultural neuropsychological assessment, and professional ethics.

Diana M. Mendez, Ph.D. Specialty Mental Health Psychology Program Manager; Dr. Mendez earned her doctorate in Clinical Psychology in 2012 from the University of Detroit Mercy. She then completed a postdoctoral fellowship in Clinical Health Psychology through the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine. Upon completion of her training, Dr. Mendez worked as an Attending Psychologist at University of Miami Miller School of Medicine/Jackson Memorial Medical Center, providing clinical care and supervising postdoctoral fellows, interns, and practicum students. Most of Dr. Mendez' clinical experiences have been with diverse inner-city populations, with individuals exposed to various types of traumas. In addition, she has served as an investigator on studies looking at cultural factors that impact clinical presentation, manifestation of

psychopathology (e.g., depression, PTSD), and delivery of effective treatments to ethnic minority populations. Her primary clinical and research interests focus on trauma, resiliency, minority mental health, evidence-based practices, and health psychology. She joined the Orlando VAHCS in 2014. She trained in a Consultant for Prolonged Exposure Therapy (PE), and is trained in Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT), Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for SUD (CBT-SUD), and Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT). Dr. Mendez has been actively involved in the training committee for the last 6 years, at all levels of training (i.e., externs, interns, fellows), and supervising trainees through BHIP and TRuST in both English and Spanish. She is also the Orlando VA Evidence Treatment Coordinator and is devoted to increase access to evidence base care to veterans across sites of care throughout the Orlando VA Health care system. Dr. Mendez is currently the Primary Investigator in an HSR&D COVID19 grant, looking at Changes in the Delivery of Evidenced Based Psychotherapies for Depression and PTSD as the Result of COVID-19 Pandemic. She is licensed in the state of Florida. She loves spending time with family and friends, basketball, music, and reading.

Laura Meyers, PhD, ABPP, is the Program Manager of the *Trauma Recovery Specialty Team (TRuST – PTSD treatment team)* and a Psychology Supervisor at Lake Nona. She earned her PhD in Clinical-Community Psychology at the University of South Carolina in 2006, completed internship at the Bay Pines VA Healthcare System, completed a postdoctoral fellowship in Health Psychology and Serious Mental Illness at the Minneapolis VA Healthcare System, and completed her ABPP certification in Clinical Psychology. She worked on the new Primary Care Mental Health Integration Team at the Minneapolis VA for 5 years, co-directed the DBT program, and was the Evidence-based Psychotherapy Coordinator. She then worked as the Program Coordinator for the PTSD treatment team at the Minneapolis VA for 5 years and developed and ran the Journeys Program, a national 12-week intensive outpatient program that provided DBT and PE. She then moved to the Orlando VA in 2017 to help develop the PTSD program and because Minneapolis is chilly. She is certified in Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT) and Prolonged Exposure (PE) and is a national trainer and consultant for PE. She is also nationally certified in Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) by the DBT-Linehan Board of Certification. She loves to supervise all levels of trainees in evidence-based approaches for trauma and/or Borderline Personality Disorder, specifically PE, CPT, DBT, ACT, and IBCT. She supervises trainees through TRuST, as well as in PE and DBT. Personally, she is a recovering perfectionist and is working on taking life less seriously. She loves spending time with her family and fostering dogs, who are the perfect examples of inconsistently applied behavioral principles (both her kids and the dogs).

Savannah McSheffrey, Ph.D., *TRuST-PTSD treatment team, Lake Baldwin*, completed her undergraduate work at the University of South Florida and received her doctorate in clinical psychology from the University of Rhode Island. Her predoctoral and postdoctoral training were both completed at Boston VA Healthcare System with an emphasis in treating PTSD. She then worked as a staff psychologist at the Rhode Island Hospital Partial Hospital Program and was a clinical assistant professor at the Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University. She moved to Orlando VA in 2020 and provides supervision to trainees in evidence-based approaches including Dialectical Behavioral Therapy, Prolonged Exposure, and Cognitive Processing Therapy. Her clinical interests include working with underserved populations, trauma, emotion dysregulation, and Borderline Personality Disorder.

Bernice Vazquez-Garay, Psy.D. was born and raised in Puerto Rico. She earned a master's degree in industrial organizational psychology from the University of Puerto Rico in Rio Piedras before relocating in 2004 to the states with her husband, whom was a JAG Officer for the ARMY at the time. As a military spouse, Dr. Vazquez-Garay had the opportunity to travel around the country, spend time with many military families, and immerse herself into the military culture. In 2007, she was accepted by the prestigious Professional Psychology Program from the Columbian College of Arts and Sciences at George Washington University in Washington, DC. Dr. Vazquez-Garay earned her Doctor of Psychology degree in 2010 and completed her doctoral internship at the Jefferson County Internship Consortium in Louisville, KY; part of the umbrella of the Seven Counties Services where she was hired in 2011 as a Staff Psychologist. Dr. Vazquez-Garay worked in this position for four years attending the mental health needs of the underserved Hispanic population in Kentucky before relocating to Orlando, FL in the Summer of 2015. She currently holds licenses to practice psychology in Puerto Rico, Kentucky, and Florida. In the Fall of 2016, Dr. Vazquez-Garay was appointed to serve as a Licensed Clinical Psychologist for the IOP/SUD Program at OVAMC at Lake Baldwin. Dr. Vazquez-Garay's personal interests includes practicing Yoga, area in which she holds an instructor certification of 200 hrs. RYT by Yoga Alliance, playing the piano, and spending time with her husband and two children.

Laurie Wolf, Ph.D., *Medical Psychology Program*. Dr. Wolf is a Clinical Health Psychologist embedded within a number of medical clinics including Cardiology, Oncology/Radiation Oncology, and Endocrinology. She is a part of several multidisciplinary teams working to provide health behavior treatment and develop programming, including shared medical appointments, to provide comprehensive care to our Veterans. Her work includes providing individual and group health behavior treatment

that aims to improve functioning and quality of life among Veterans with medical conditions. She provides brief interventions with an emphasis on motivational interviewing and cognitive-behavioral and acceptance-based strategies to make healthy behavior changes (e.g., smoking cessation, dietary adherence) and improve coping skills to manage chronic illnesses. She completed her undergraduate work at the University of South Florida and obtained her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology at Arizona State University in 2016. She completed predoctoral internship and postdoctoral training, primarily in Behavioral Medicine, at VA Boston Healthcare System.

Mimi Zhao, Ph.D., is a staff psychologist as the Orlando VA Medical Center currently working BHIP and TRuST. She received her graduate training in Clinical Psychology at the University of Mississippi and completed her pre-doctoral internship at the Medical College of Georgia/Charlie Norwood VA Medical Center consortium and her post-doctoral training at the Orlando VA Medical Center. She is experienced in assessment and treatment of trauma, personality, mood, and anxiety disorders (PTSD, BPD, depression, anxiety, panic, chronic pain, insomnia, and eating disorders) using various evidence based treatment modalities and is certified in Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT) and Prolonged Exposure (PE). However, she has a special interest in third wave cognitive behavioral therapies such as Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT) and Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) focusing on acceptance, values, and meaning. Her personal interests include hiking, music, gardening, and traveling.